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201530Z Feb 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/009W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8253  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000779

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR WILLIAMS  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL. 02/14/11  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: MUGABE DEFIANT AT NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION FOR  
DIPLOMATS

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CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL IRVING. REASONS: 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

REF: HARARE 775

SUMMARY

1. (C) PRESIDENT MUGABE STRUCK A DEFIANT TONE FEBRUARY 19 AT HIS ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION FOR HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. THE PRESIDENT SIGNALLED THAT HE WOULD NOT PERMIT THE ACCREDITATION OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS FOR THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, INSISTING THAT ZIMBABWE WOULD NOT TOLERATE "DIRTY INTERFERING HANDS IN ITS DOMESTIC AFFAIRS." ON LAND, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S FAST TRACK RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM WAS IRREVERSIBLE, AND THAT DONORS WERE WELCOME TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE SO LONG AS THEY DID NOT INSIST ON CHANGES IN APPROACH. MUGABE BLAMED THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ON THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND FALLING PRICES IN THE INTERNATIONAL MINERAL AND COMMODITY MARKETS. ALL IN ALL, THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS REVEALED A REMARKABLE CAPACITY FOR SELF-DELUSION. HIS INTIMATION THAT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO MONITOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ARE A TROUBLING SIGN THAT MUGABE HAS EVERY INTENTION OF RUNNING A DIRTY RACE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) USAID MISSION DIRECTOR REPRESENTED CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ON FEBRUARY 20 AT PRESIDENT MUGABE'S ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION FOR HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. IN HIS PREPARED REMARKS, MOST OF WHICH WERE LATER BROADCAST ON THE  
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ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION'S NIGHTLY NEWSCAST, THE PRESIDENT TOUCHED ON THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, LAND REFORM, THE ECONOMY, AND THE DROC CONFLICT.

ELECTION

3. (U) MUGABE CLAIMED THAT THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF JUNE 2000 HAD ENDORSED ZANU-PF'S MANDATE, AND WERE WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED TO HAVE BEEN BOTH FREE AND FAIR, DESPITE A "MASSIVE DEGREE OF EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE." HE WARNED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NOT TO "EXPLOIT...THE PREVAILING PRACTICE OF OBSERVING ELECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF INTERFERING WITH THEM AND UNDERMINING OUR PEOPLE'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO DECIDE WHO SHALL GOVERN." IN WHAT WE TOOK TO BE A CLEAR SIGNAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, MUGABE EMPHASIZED THAT ZIMBABWE, AS A SOVEREIGN NATION, WOULD NOT TOLERATE "THE PHENOMENON OF DIRTY INTERFERING HANDS IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS."

LAND

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14. (U) THE PRESIDENT WAS AS UNAPOLOGETIC AS EVER ON THE ISSUE OF LAND. HE DECLARED THAT THE FAST TRACK PROGRAM WOULD CONTINUE UNABATED, AS "THIS COUNTRY CAN NEVER EXPERIENCE PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE FUTURE IF THE PRESENT COLONIAL DISPARITIES ARE PERPETUATED." MUGABE ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR RESOURCES FOR LAND REFORM, BUT SAID INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE WOULD BE REJECTED "OUT OF HAND" IF DONORS INSISTED ON ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FAST TRACK APPROACH.  
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ECONOMY

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15. (U) AS HE HAS MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, THE PRESIDENT LAID THE BLAME FOR ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC DETERIORATION ON "EXOGENOUS" FORCES, SPECIFICALLY CONDITIONALITIES IMPOSED BY THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND BY DEPRESSED PRICES IN THE INTERNATIONAL MINERAL AND COMMODITY MARKETS. ZIMBABWE'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, MUGABE SAID, HAD SUFFERED BECAUSE OF ITS PORTRAYAL AS A COUNTRY TORN BY RAMPANT VIOLENCE AND INSTABILITY, AN INACCURATE PERCEPTION "PEDDLED BY BRITAIN AND ITS UNWITTING ALLIES."

DROC

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16. (U) MUGABE ASSERTED THAT ZIMBABWE AND ITS SADC NEIGHBORS WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO. "WE ARE NOW MORE HOPEFUL THAN BEFORE. FOR NOW, THE ALLIES IN THE CONGO, THAT IS, ANGOLA, NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE, REMAIN SOLIDLY TOGETHER BEHIND THE COUNTRY AND ITS NEW PRESIDENT, JOSEPH KABILA."

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00
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	SAS-00	/009W					

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COMMENT

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17. (C) THE PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION IS AN ANNUAL EVENT THAT IS USUALLY LONG ON DIPLOMATIC FROTH AND SHORT ON SUBSTANTIVE ATTENTION TO ISSUES. THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, MUGABE OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERED IT IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE SEVERAL OF THE HOT TOPICS OF THE DAY. HIS REMARKS REVEALED AN AMAZING CAPACITY FOR SELF-DELUSION, AS HE DECLINED TO ACCEPT ONE IOTA OF BLAME FOR THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DECLINE AND BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER. HIS COMMENTS ON LAND AND THE ECONOMY WERE TYPICALLY VITRIOLIC, BROKE NO NEW GROUND, AND INDEED ADUMBRATED HIS LIKELY RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM UNDP ADMINISTRATOR MARK MALLOCH-BROWN. ON THE OTHER HAND, MUGABE'S REFERENCE TO "DIRTY INTERFERING HANDS" IN ZIMBABWEAN ELECTIONS IS TROUBLING, AS IT APPEARS TO SIGNAL THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION NOT TO ALLOW INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS TO MONITOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS, COMBINED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S  
EXPULSION OF TWO CRITICAL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS (REFTEL),  
STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO RUN A DIRTY  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND DOES NOT WANT FOREIGN JOURNALISTS  
OR INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS HERE AS WITNESSES.

18. (C) THE PRESIDENT APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH AND  
LINGERED AT THE RECEPTION MUCH LONGER THAN USUAL. ALTHOUGH  
MUGABE HAS, IN THE PAST, DEPARTED ABOUT 15 MINUTES AFTER  
HIS SPEECH, HE STAYED SO LONG ON THIS OCCASION THAT MANY  
ATTENDEES EVENTUALLY IGNORED PROTOCOL AND LEFT BEFORE HE  
DID. ABOUT HALF THE CROWD HAD DEPARTED WHEN THE USAID  
MISSION DIRECTOR TOOK HER LEAVE, AND THE PRESIDENT WAS  
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STILL THERE GLAD-HANDING. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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